

# Governor Signs Gender Identity Nondiscrimination Act

*Protects transgender individuals from discrimination*

☒ Dover, DE – Governor Jack Markell signed the [Gender Identity Nondiscrimination Act](#) (SB 97) today, ensuring equal legal protections to transgender individuals in Delaware.

The bill forbids discrimination against a person on the basis of gender identity and provides for increased punishment of a person who intentionally selects the victim of a crime because of the victim's gender identity. Prior to its passage, it has been legal to fire someone, deny them housing, or throw them out of a restaurant simply because they are transgender.

The changes established by the SB 97 afford transgender Delawareans the same legal protections already granted to everyone on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, among other characteristics. Nearly 200 Delaware businesses had signed a statement of support for the passage of the law.

"Our mission to build a welcoming and accepting state that can compete in the global economy requires laws that reflect our values," said Markell. "Today, we guarantee that our transgender relatives and neighbors can work hard, ☒ participate in our communities, and live their lives with dignity and in safety."

"I especially want to thank my friend Sarah McBride, an intelligent and talented Delawarean who happens to be transgender. She courageously stood before the General Assembly to describe her personal struggles with gender

identity and communicate her desire to return home after her college graduation without fear. Her tireless advocacy for passage of this legislation has made a real difference for all transgender people in Delaware.”

The Senate passed the final version of the bill earlier in the day by an 11-9 vote following approval in the House on Tuesday by a 24-17 margin. Senate Majority Whip Margaret Rose Henry, D-Wilmington East, was the lead sponsor, with additional sponsorship from Senate President Patricia Blevins and Representative Bryon Short.

✖ “This simply does something that should have been done a long time ago. We are extending the same basic protections against discrimination and hate crimes that all our other citizens enjoy to a group that has been discriminated against for a long time,” said Henry. “When the governor signs this bill, it says Delaware is a welcoming place to come and live and that we welcome all people and that we treat them fairly and equitably.”

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